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Intelligence community role mired in conflicting opinions

By FRANK J. SMIST, JR.

In today's world, there are many myths about the intelligence community. The confusion is best seen at the headquarters of the Central Intelligence Agency in Langley, Virginia. On the outside of the building is a quotation from the Gospel of John: "You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free." Meanwhile, inside on the first floor there is a sign that proclaims: "Intelligence: The second oldest profession in the world with even less morals than the first." As a result of all the myths and conflicting opinions, great confusion exists today as to the role of intelligence and the functions of the intelligence community.

At the present time, the United States Intelligence Community includes: the Central

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Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, Army Intelligence, Navy Intelligence, Air Force Intelligence, and officers for specialized foreign intelligence. In addition, components of the following agencies and departments are an integral part of the Intelligence Community: the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Energy and the Department of State. Although the Intelligence Community is coordinated and led by the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, the President himself is the overall person in charge of the entire system and the consumer of the intelligence product that eventually results.

Although the image of the Central Intelligence Agency has been colored and distorted by the myths of James Bond, the CIA is composed of much more than just an operations section. Functionally, the CIA

(and the other intelligence agencies) focuses, in the words of former CIA official Ray Cline, on "activity, people and product." The CIA has four functional divisions: 1.) administration, 2.) science and technology, 3.) operations (intelligence collection and covert operations, and 4.) intelligence (analyzing the data collected and formulating estimates). Each of these functions is essential and integral to the continued successful operation of the Central Intelligence Agency and the other components of the Intelligence Community.

Intelligence activity can best be described as a feedback loop. First, data is collected. This can be done either overtly or covertly. (Most of the data the U.S. Intelligence Community processes originates from other

sources.) Next, the collected data is analyzed. Is the data in the words of Cline "Any damn good?" Is it reliable? Research may be necessary to supplement the data. Ultimately, an intelligence estimate is made. This is an attempt to predict what will happen or occur in the future. According to Cline, the next word to use here is "guess." After the estimate is completed, it is reported to the policy makers who make the final decisions about what to do. Then, either nothing is done or diplomatic, military or covert action is undertaken. After this, the process is repeated all over again.

In the past several years, several books have appeared that have been very critical of the CIA and intelligence work. Former CIA employees such as Victor Marchetti, Phillip Agee, Frank Snepp and John Stockwell have painted a picture of the CIA as a "rogue elephant" out of control. Agee, in fact, has attempted to sabotage the CIA by blowing the cover of intelligence operatives working for the CIA. Mean-

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while, defenders of the intelligence agencies have attempted to refute the critics. Presently, a major campaign is underway to "unleash" the CIA and other intelligence agencies.

In a nuclear age when massive weapons of destruction can be sent on their journeys of death at any moment, policy and decision-makers need hard and good intelligence. Cline's *Secrets, Spies and Scholars* details the intelligence failure that led to the debacle at Pearl Harbor. At the same time, past intelligence agency abuses make a constant and rigorous supervision of these agencies by the House and Senate Intelligence Committees a matter of high priority. Nevertheless, a strong and effective intelligence system is absolutely essential to protect American national security interests in the nuclear era.

Not so many years ago, CIA officials could not appear on American campuses because of the violent reactions their visits produced. This evening and tomorrow morning, Frederick P. Hitz, Legislative Counsel of the CIA, will be on the OU campus to discuss the role of the CIA in the 1980s. The Hitz visit will provide new information and insight to the continuing debate about the goals and operations of American intelligence.

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